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DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT  
**PROSPECTS FOR THE LAKE ERIE REGION**

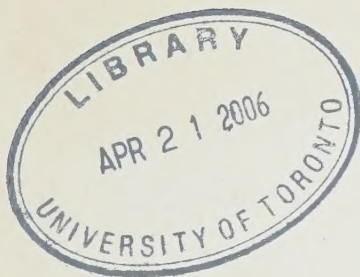
April 1972

PHASE I:

A report on the issues, conflicts and trends  
that should guide citizens, community leaders  
and planners in shaping the region's future.

APRIL 1972

Ontario Ministry of Treasury, Economics  
and Intergovernmental Affairs  
W. Darcy McKeough, Minister  
H. I. Macdonald, Deputy Minister



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study required the co-operation and assistance of a great many organizations and individuals. The Regional Development Branch is especially grateful to the people of the region, the Lake Erie Regional Development Council, the Lake Erie Regional Advisory Board, members of the business community, municipal councils, industrial commissioners, planning boards, municipal clerks, members of the academic community and various government departments. This report also benefited substantially from the ideas and advice contributed by the Haldimand-Norfolk Study Group. Finally, a special word of thanks to the Ontario Statistical Centre for its continuous and most helpful co-operation.

## WHAT THIS REPORT HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH

The most important point to note about this booklet is this: although it deals with the question of how the Lake Erie Region might best be developed, it is *not a plan* for the region's development.

Rather, it is an analysis intended to stimulate discussion about the future of the region, among the people who live and work there. It will be supported by a much longer, more technical paper resulting from three years of investigation and analysis. Copies of the technical report will be available on request.

This booklet presents a brief picture of development issues and conflicts as they are now evolving in the region's social, economic and physical resources, and an analysis of trends. It concludes with brief descriptions of development concepts which would never be applied in such "pure" or extreme form but which illustrate three different ways in which the region's growth could be shaped.

This is the third report of this kind to be written about regions in southwestern Ontario. Papers on neighboring Niagara and Midwestern Ontario regions have already appeared, and a fourth paper, on the St. Clair Region, will be published shortly.

The Regional Development Branch hopes this report will provide a sound basis for the beginning of a long-term development plan for the Lake Erie Region.

After this analysis has been thoroughly discussed and a plan has been agreed upon, the Regional Development Branch will publish a new report on the region, setting out specific policy recommendations and suggesting ways of acting upon them.

Once a plan has been agreed upon by all levels of government and by the people of the region, it will serve as a guide for governments, businessmen, industrialists, developers and others whose decisions affect the shape and the future of the region.

The underlying aims of Ontario's program of regional development were set out in 1966, in a white paper called *Design for Development*. In it, the government announced that because economic growth and social development do not occur evenly throughout the province, a program was being initiated to guide, encourage and assist the orderly and rational development of each of the province's ten regions.

The fundamental aims of the program are to enhance the quality of life for the people of Ontario, to encourage private enterprise to prosper within a healthy and balanced community, to improve the effectiveness of provincial services in each region and to conserve our natural resources (including agricultural land) for the benefit of all the people of the province.

# LAKE ERIE REGION: HEARTLAND OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

## WHAT IT IS

The Lake Erie Region — an area designated as such for purposes of regional planning — is made up of four counties: Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford. Its population is about 480,000 or roughly 6-1/2 per cent of the population of Ontario. Its area is 3,350 square miles or slightly less than one per cent of the province's total area.

## WHERE IT IS

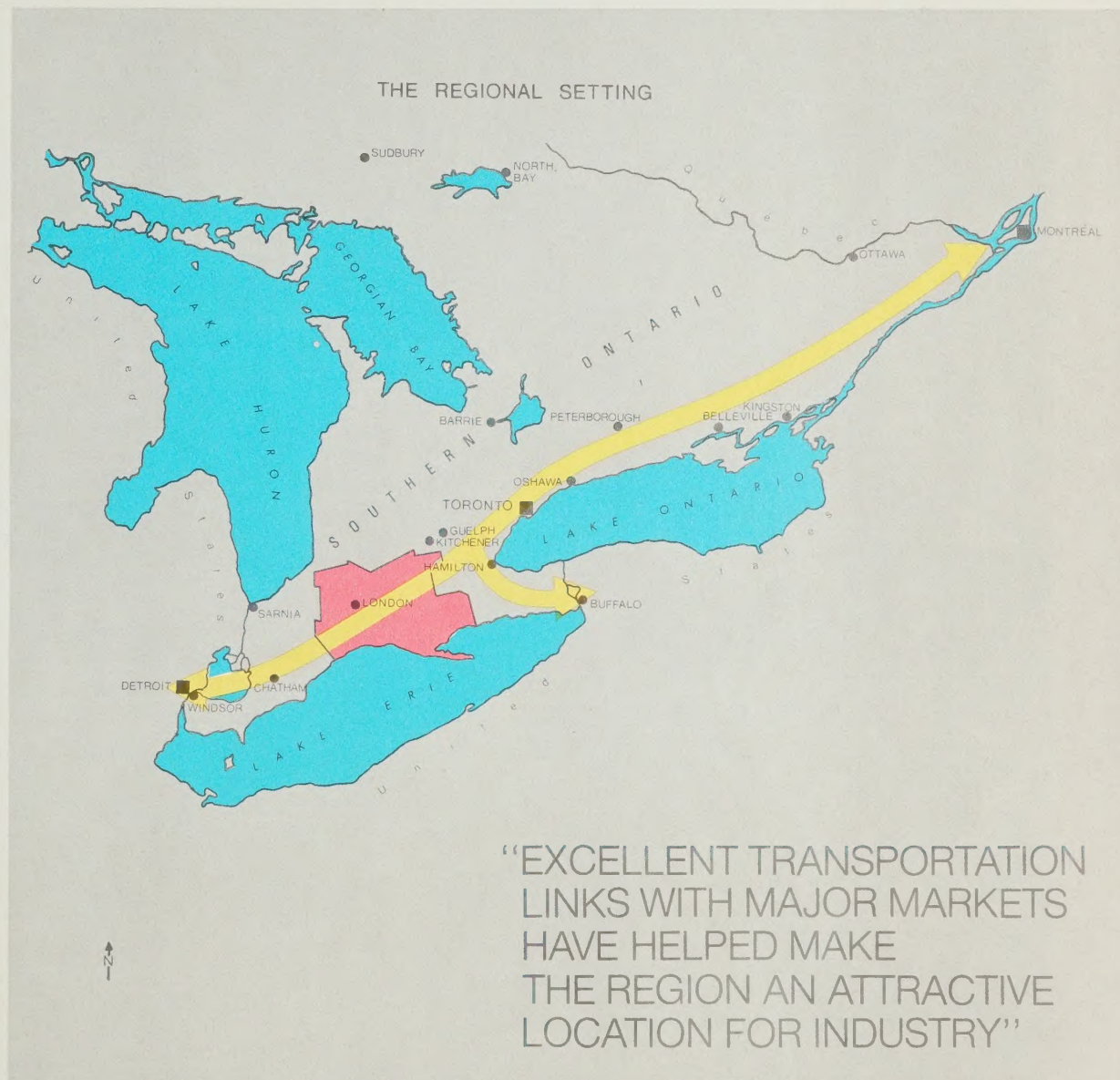
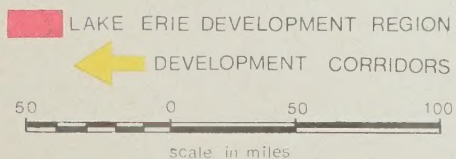
Centrally located in southwest Ontario, the Lake Erie Region is bordered on the west by the St. Clair Region, on the north by the Midwestern Ontario Region, on the east by the Niagara Region, and on the south by Lake Erie itself.

## CLOSE TO MAJOR MARKETS

As the arrows on the map show, this region has ready access to several of the major market areas of Canada and the United States: Detroit-Windsor; the so-called "Golden Horseshoe" encircling the eastern end of Lake Ontario, from Oshawa around through Toronto and on to Niagara Falls; Buffalo and onward to other cities of up-state New York.

Excellent transportation links with these markets have helped make the Lake Erie Region an attractive location for industry.

## THE REGIONAL SETTING



SOURCE: Regional Development Branch, Ministry of Treasury and Economics

## HOW FIVE NEW INDUSTRIES HELP FORETELL THE FUTURE



"FOUR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS ALONG THE LAKESHORE PORTEND A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN GROWTH"

### WILL THE LAKESHORE SOMEDAY RIVAL LONDON?

A glance at this map shows the locations of the Lake Erie Region's two major development areas — one existing, the other potential.

The existing development area lies along the transportation corridor linking Detroit and Montreal. London, the dominant city along this path, is expected to remain the centre of this growth corridor throughout the foreseeable future.


The potential development area lies on the north shore of Lake Erie, where a new pattern of industrial and urban growth has already begun to take shape.

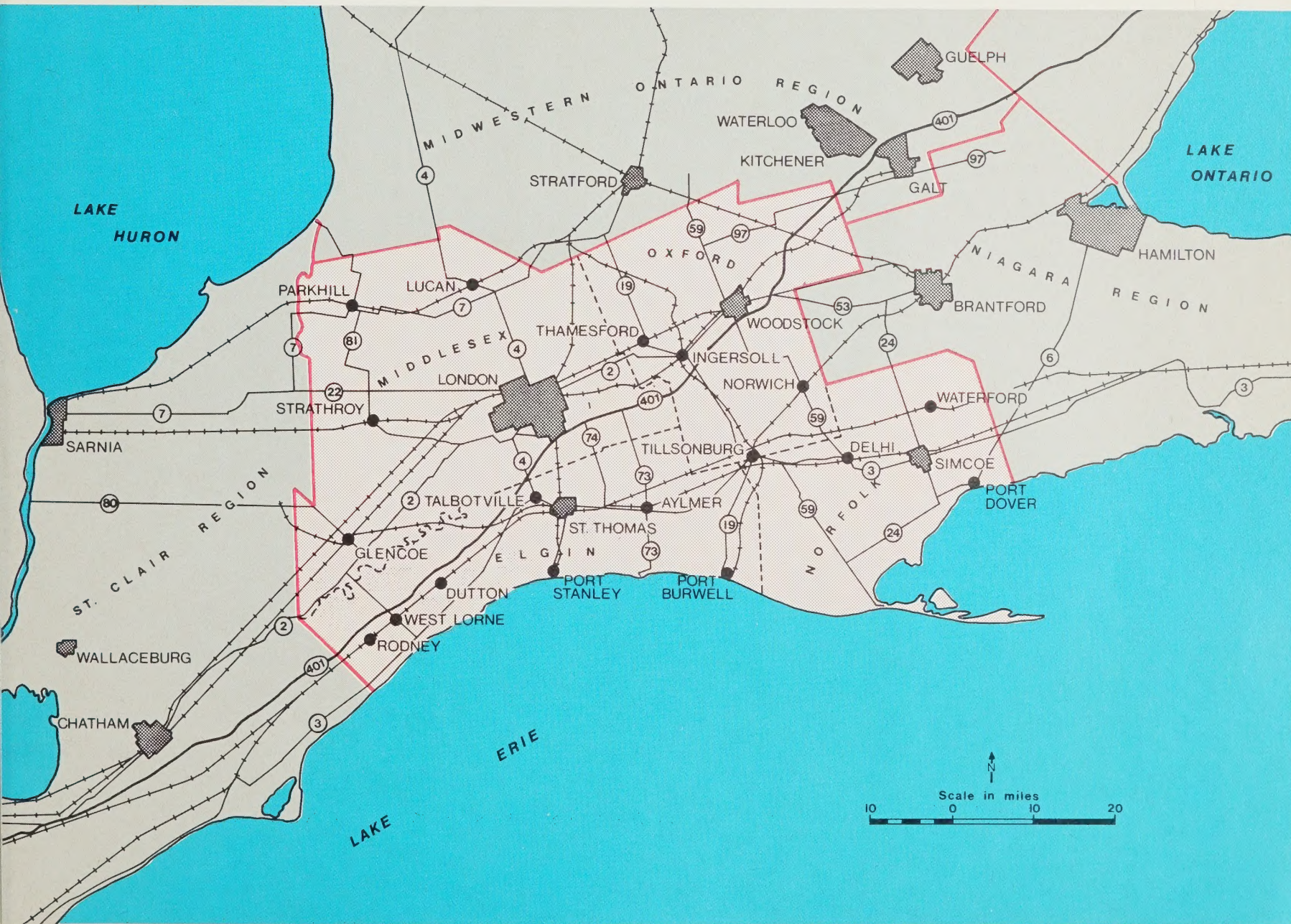
Significantly, five of the largest developments announced in Ontario in the past few years are located in these two areas: at Talbotville, an assembly plant established by the Ford Motor Company of Canada; at Port Burwell, Dominion Foundries and Steel Limited (Dofasco); and at Nanticoke, plants to be operated by the Steel Company of Canada Limited, Texaco Canada Limited and Ontario Hydro.

It is more than coincidence, too, that four of these development sites are situated on the lakeshore — a clear indication of what probably lies ahead in population shifts, changes and growth for the Lake Erie Region.

## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION

### LEGEND

- REGIONAL BOUNDARY
- - - - COUNTY BOUNDARY
- 401 EXPRESSWAY
- 2 HIGHWAY
- + + + + RAILWAY
-  ● URBAN CENTRE



“UNLIKE OTHER AREAS THAT  
HAVE CHANGED MARKEDLY,  
THE LAKE ERIE REGION  
HAS REMAINED STABLE  
AND ORDERLY”



# A REGION WHERE FARMING AND INDUSTRY LIVE WELL TOGETHER

Fifty years ago, the Lake Erie Region was largely a rural area based on agriculture. Since then, manufacturing and service industries (such as retail stores and insurance companies) have gradually become predominant.

In the main, this evolution, though not consciously controlled, has been orderly. As a result, the region has escaped the social and environmental disturbances that have beset other changing regions.

In some other parts of Ontario, for instance, manufacturing has developed at the expense of agriculture. The Lake Erie Region, on the contrary, has attracted manufacturers who have thrived as farmers have prospered. These include feed mill operators, meat packers, tobacco processors, cheese makers and dairy operators. And so the region's rural communities have grown and evolved without serious setbacks or disruptions.

Similarly, such service industries as trade, finance, insurance, community and personal services and public administration have all evolved in such a way as to contribute to the growth of farming and manufacturing.

And so, compared to many other settled regions that have undergone similar changes in their economies, the Lake Erie Region remains quite stable and orderly. Its cities, towns, villages and rural areas are interrelated in such a way that they contribute to each other's needs and development.

## THREE ASPECTS OF ORDERLY GROWTH

There are three basic aspects to the development of the region, all of which, until five years ago, helped keep its growth orderly.

### MODERATE PACE

1. The *pace* of regional development has traditionally been continuous yet moderate.

Moderation is the key. When a region's economy and social structure grow and change too slowly, the region stagnates.

When they grow and change too fast, the region faces problems it can't cope with overnight — sudden needs for physical facilities such as roads and sewers, a shortage of money to pay for them (and no means of raising it) and various other problems in public administration. Even such big institutions in London as the University of Western Ontario and London Life Insurance Company have grown apace with the city and the region.

### MODERATE SCALE

2. The *scale* of development has also been moderate. As a result, the region has been neither disrupted nor dominated by any big company, institution or industry. With no "giants" creating imbalance in its economy, the Lake Erie Region, compared to other regions of Ontario, has been relatively stable, experiencing few of the booms and busts that have occurred in some one-industry towns.

### COMPATIBLE WITH NATURE

3. The *type* of development has not, for the most part, been the kind that disturbs the natural environment, the economy or the social structure. There have been no big logging operations to lay waste the landscape; no big new industrial plants creating severe labour shortages one season and large-scale layoffs the next; no sudden, huge influxes of workers whose needs for housing, transportation, schooling, and recreation would drastically alter the region's social patterns.

### BIG CHANGES FORESEEN

But will the pace, the scale and the type of development continue to benefit the Lake Erie Region as well in the future as they have done in the past?

Indications are that without conscious direction the region may not remain so fortunate.

### PACE IS ACCELERATING

From 1951 to 1966, while the population of Ontario as a whole was increasing 51 per cent, the population of the Lake Erie Region increased only 37 per cent.

In a more recent five-year period, however, — from 1965 to 1969 — the population of the Lake Erie Region grew faster (up 9.1 per cent) than the population of Ontario as a whole (up 8.9 per cent).

When the most recent population trends are projected into the future, they indicate increases from the present 480,000 to 550,000 in 1981 and to 720,000 (or 50 per cent) by the year 2001.

But past population trends alone don't provide the truest picture of what is likely to happen, because they don't allow for some of the unusually big developments that are known to be in the offing.

Lakeshore developments *alone* can be expected to mean a population increase of 200,000 to 300,000 people.

Past trends also provide few indications of where the fastest growth is likely to occur. In the immediate years past, growth (by percentage) was fastest in urban centres, notably London, St. Thomas and Woodstock. But the fastest percentage of growth in the future will probably occur along the lakeshore, which had the region's slowest growth rate in the past.

Meanwhile, the population is expected to continue growing vigorously in many cities, towns and villages, especially those touching the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway (Highway 401). In actual numbers, as opposed to percentage increases, growth in London and other major cities is expected to exceed growth along the lakeshore.

In short, the Lake Erie Region is in for some substantial population shifts and increases.

### INDUSTRY'S SCALE WILL GROW

The region also appears to be in for some impressive changes in the *scale* of such activi-



# FARMING AND INDUSTRY

ties as industry, transportation and agriculture.

*Industry* will likely consist, more and more, of major firms operating on a large scale. This is a fairly recent trend. The first major firm to set up a big operation in the region was the Ford Motor Company of Canada, which established an auto assembly plant at Talbotville in 1967. This plant employs thousands of people, most of whom live in the London-St. Thomas area. Significantly, however, a full 20 per cent of Ford's Talbotville workers commute from as far away as Simcoe.

Industrial plans announced for Nanticoke (Stelco, Texaco, Ontario Hydro) will come as a second big step in the establishment of large-scale industry in the region. The proposed development at Port Burwell (Dofasco) could well signal the start of a third phase.

*Transportation* patterns can meanwhile be expected to change. Until now, the region's road system, with the exception of Highway 401, has been designed mostly for local use. It has consisted of an extensive network of rural roads, supplemented by a highway system connecting the larger urban centres to each other.

In future, local roads will likely be improved and more direct routes established between rural and major urban areas. These new routes will include limited-access highways, such as the proposed Highway 402 from London to Sarnia. Other highways will be needed to link new shoreline developments to outside markets.

With these and other similar changes, new travel habits and patterns will emerge. Not only will motorists be able to drive more easily from one part of the Lake Erie Region to another; but also they will find it easier to drive from the Lake Erie Region to other parts of Ontario and to the United States.

With these trends will likely come changes in the patterns of housing, locations, water utilities, sewers and other basic services.

*Agriculture* is a third major activity that is likely to undergo substantial changes, some of which are underway already.

First, the economics of farming are changing, with technology becoming more and more sophisticated and the minimum size for a profitable farm becoming larger and more capital intensive.

Second, competition for agricultural land from urban and recreational uses is becoming keener. (The Ontario Government is concerned that demands for non-agricultural land-users do not take large areas of prime agricultural land out of production.)

## DISRUPTION A NEW DANGER

Finally, the *type* of industrial developments being attracted to the region could bring new problems if the industries are allowed to develop according to the dictates of the marketplace alone.

Partly because of their large size, and partly because of the nature of their processes, certain new industries could affect the natural environment and disrupt the orderly settlement of the region.

## FOUR STEPS TOWARD SOLUTION

These, then, are the major changes facing the Lake Erie Region. The big challenge is to cope with these changes through responses that are acceptable to the people and encouraging to new development.

To meet this challenge, all who take part in creating a development plan for the region should follow four steps:

1. They should identify and understand the character of the region and the developments that are taking place in it.
2. They should identify and evaluate all conceivable alternatives for a plan.
3. They should decide which are the most desirable choices to shape future development.
4. They should help devise the best strategies for making those choices a reality.

"THE BIG CHALLENGE: FINDING RESPONSES THAT SUIT THE PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGE THE ECONOMY TO GROW"

"COMMUNITIES LYING WITHIN THE 'BIG L' CONTAIN 80 PER CENT OF THE REGION'S URBAN POPULATION—AND ARE GROWING FAST"

# HOW—AND WHERE—THE LAKE ERIE REGION IS GROWING

To understand the hows and whys of development taking place in the Lake Erie Region, it is best to break them down into three sectors: urban development; farming; and development associated with Lake Erie itself. Here is how each of these three is influencing development as a whole:

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

If you look at a population map of the Lake Erie Region, you will clearly see that most of the people are now clustered along two adjoining strips shaped like a capital L lying on its side.

London, not surprisingly, forms the focal point for the L-shaped figure, and the region's other two major cities form its extremities. The big L's long stem runs westward along a swath centred on Highway 401 from Woodstock to London, and its shorter base runs southward from London to St. Thomas.

Communities lying within this big L make up about 80 per cent of the region's urban population and about 60 per cent of its total population. Growth in this area is quite distinct from growth elsewhere in the region.

For instance, the population of London increased by about 31 per cent between 1961 and 1971, while the population of the rest of Middlesex County grew by only 12 per cent.

Similarly, St. Thomas, Woodstock and Ingersoll — all within the big L — experienced a combined population increase of 17.8 per cent during 1961-71, while the rest of Elgin and Oxford counties grew by only five per cent. Meanwhile, the population of Norfolk County, which lies entirely outside the big L, grew by only six per cent.

What's more, most of the smaller centres within the big L have grown faster than normal for places their size.

There's nothing mysterious about the population growth within the big L; the cities there have good locations with excellent transportation at hand (notably Highway 401), and London is big enough, with a good range of stores, businesses and services, to attract newcomers.

Even some local residents might be surprised, however, at the extent to which London, St. Thomas and Woodstock, dominate the region's economy. They not only provide an above-average number of jobs in wholesaling, retailing, financing, community and personal services and public administration; but they also account for more than 80 per cent of the entire region's jobs in manufacturing.

The urban centres within the big L have developed independently of each other, and yet their businesses and industries nicely complement one another, collectively offering a wide and full range of goods, services and jobs.

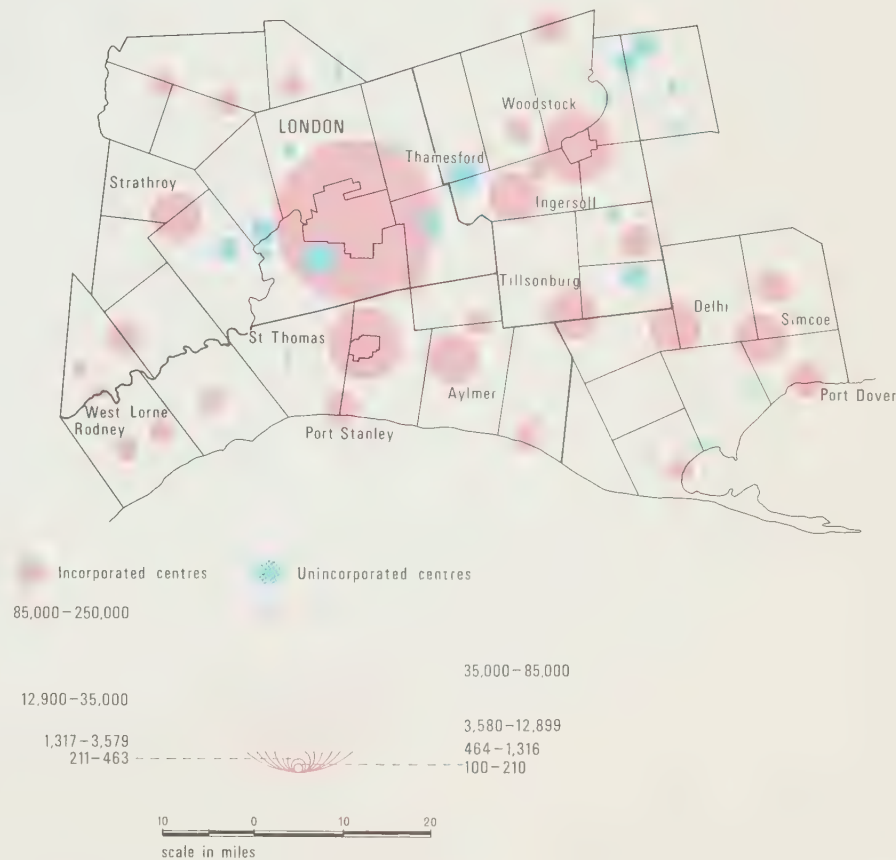
The largest centre, London, is strong in education, retailing and finance. Demand for these activities has grown and is still growing — fast.

In St. Thomas, the predominant industries are machinery and related manufacturing.

Ingersoll's big specialties are metal fabricating and food processing.

Only Woodstock, among the four major centres along the big L, has no comparable specialties.

Several urban centres lying outside the big L serve as social and commercial centres for the rural areas and supplement the services offered by London, St. Thomas and Woodstock. As a group these other centres have enjoyed a moderate, sustained growth. This growth has been linked to the expansion of agriculture in the surrounding rural areas, and such activities as food processing and tobacco curing are centred in such towns, notably Aylmer, Delhi, Tillsonburg and Simcoe.



Source: Statistics Canada Preliminary Data, 1971  
Dept. of Municipal Affairs, Assessed Population  
Regional Development Branch, Ministry of Treasury and Economics

## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, 1971

# AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

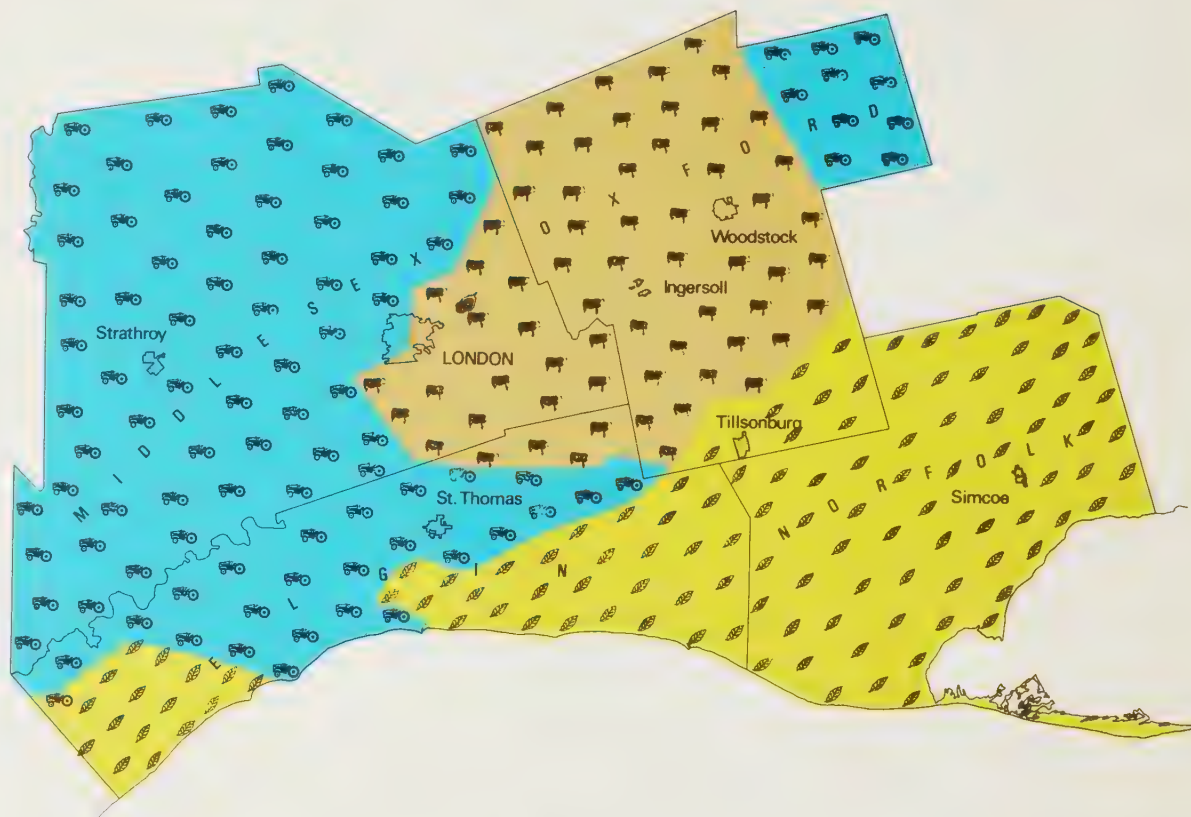
About 135,000 people, or 30 per cent of the population of the Lake Erie Region, live in rural areas. More than 60,000 of these are involved in farming.

The region contains much good farming country. It has a warm climate in summer, a long growing season and several good types of soil. As a result, several farming specialties have developed: tobacco in Norfolk County and the eastern parts of Elgin; dairy farming in Oxford and the eastern parts of Middlesex; and mixed farming, which is found throughout the region, is emphasized especially in the northern part of Oxford and Middlesex and the western part of Elgin.

Most specialized farms are operated by people who depend entirely on farming for a living. Many of the mixed farms are part-time operations, run by people who have decided to get other jobs instead of investing more time, money and energy in farming.

The region's farm families seem certain to change their style of living in the years ahead as the technology of farming changes, the average profitable farm becomes larger and requires a bigger capital investment, and as jobs in urban centres lure many rural people away from the land.

These changes will likely be most pronounced in the big L area formed by St. Thomas, London and Woodstock, and along the shore of Lake Erie, where heavy growth and development are in the offing.



## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION PREDOMINANT AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

### LEGEND

Dairying Tobacco Mixed

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRANCH,  
MINISTRY OF TREASURY, ECONOMICS AND  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

“BETTER TECHNOLOGY, LARGER FARMS  
AND THE LURE OF THE CITY WILL ALL  
AFFECT THE LIFESTYLE OF THE  
REGION'S FARM FAMILIES”

# LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENT

The north shore of Lake Erie is in the early stages of becoming a corridor of major industrial development. The first stage has begun in Nanticoke, with plants now being established by Stelco, Texaco and Ontario Hydro. By the end of the 1970's, at least one other development of similar scale — and perhaps two — will likely be initiated elsewhere along the lakeshore. This means that the lakeshore area, which is now mostly farmland, will eventually have to accommodate 200,000 to 300,000 new residents. While this growth is occurring, the public's demand for recreation space will be increasing at an unprecedented rate. And so, to meet this demand and to satisfy the broader principles set out by the provincial government for the intelligent use of land as a resource, industries should be encouraged to provide open-space recreational areas between their plants and the shoreline. Ample public access to Lake Erie should be made available by restricting industrial access to the lakeshore to narrow service corridors.

A special report reviewing the implications of the Nanticoke development has been prepared by the Haldimand-Norfolk Study Group of the former provincial Department of Municipal Affairs and submitted to the Ontario Cabinet.



LOCATION OF NEW INDUSTRIAL SITES

“NEW INDUSTRY WILL EVENTUALLY MEAN A POPULATION OF 200,000 TO 300,000 ALONG THE LAKESHORE”

# FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, THESE QUESTIONS NEED ANSWERS

Just as developments in the Lake Erie Region can be broadly categorized as urban, agricultural or lakeshore (see page 9), so can the questions that should be asked and answered about the future of the region.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Because the Lake Erie Region lies within easy reach of major market areas in Canada and the United States, and because the pace, scale and type of development are likely to change considerably, planners and citizens concerned about the region must decide how developments the size of, say, Stelco and Dofasco can be accommodated.

Should such industries be allowed to locate anywhere they choose, or should the use of land by industry be restricted in areas where there is a good potential for recreational use?

Most people want some growth, but when does growth reach a point where enough is enough?

## TWO AREAS IN CONTRAST

An earlier section of this report (page 9) took note that there is a distinction developing between the urban centres lying within the "big L" between Woodstock, London and St. Thomas and the centres outside the big L.

This distinction can be seen in several different ways:

- Cities and towns along the big L enjoy the advantage of the region's major transportation network (Highway 401).
- Population within the big L is growing faster than elsewhere in the region.
- People (and enterprises) within the big L tend to be outward-looking, while those elsewhere are more oriented to local situations and needs.

Such distinctions, however, are at an early, flexible stage of evolution. Many options thus remain open, and questions such as these should be considered by the people of the region:

- What form should development within the big L be encouraged to assume?

- Should activities (such as business and industry) be encouraged to locate in all the communities of the area, or chiefly in London?

- If it's a good idea to spread activities throughout many communities in the area, what criteria should be used to determine where a specific type of activity belongs?

- What pattern of land use should this development area be encouraged to assume?

- What about the open areas now existing between communities within the big L — should they be encouraged to remain open, or should some be encouraged to fill in with new developments while others remain open?

- What sorts of activities should be encouraged to locate within the big L?

- What services should be provided to make the centres of the region as attractive as possible for its residents?

And so on.

## SMALL, COMPETITIVE TOWNS

Similar questions should be asked to help shape the future of the smaller urban communities lying outside the big L. One important difference, however, should be kept in mind: Whereas towns and cities within the big L tend to complement one another in their activities and services, towns outside the L tend to be competitive with each other. One reason is that they all attract much the same kind of industry. Another reason is that because their growth is slow, they are anxious to attract industry and commerce, if necessary at the expense of rival towns.

Among the questions that arise for these towns are:

- Is it reasonable to expect they will experience much industrial growth?

- Should such growth be encouraged?

- If so, how should this growth be distributed among them?

- Should it be concentrated in a few or spread equally?

- Should competition among them be allowed to continue, or should they be organized to complement one another?

## RELATING THE TWO AREAS

Important, separate questions arise about the relationship between the big L area and the towns outside it:

- Is it a good idea to encourage greater linkage — physically and functionally — between these towns and the big L?
- Should these towns be encouraged to develop as self-contained communities, or should they become part of a new system in which each town and city has its own special functions?
- Should industries that want to locate in the Lake Erie Region be allowed to concentrate in the big L, or should they be encouraged to find sites outside it?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since farms on the average are growing larger and fewer in number (two trends that are taking place with increasing speed), and since some rural properties are being taken out of farming by new urban owners who generally purchase the land for non-agricultural uses, several vital questions need to be asked and answered about the future of farming in the Lake Erie Region. Such as:

1. Should the average size of farms be allowed to increase in accordance with economic criteria, or are there social factors which suggest that farm size should be limited?
2. If the size of farms is to be limited, should farmers be granted transfer payments to compensate them for these restrictions?
3. Should farming be recognized as an industry requiring ownership or use of land at low cost for as long as is economically feasible, or should the use of the land be determined by the forces of the marketplace (i.e. supply and demand)?
4. How, and to what extent, should people be restricted in their use of farmland for non-agricultural purposes?
5. How much should the government be involved in encouraging or discouraging various trends in farming?

6. Should farming be encouraged? Strongly? Mildly? Or should it be discouraged? Or left alone?

7. Should separate policies be adopted for each specialized type of farming?

## QUESTIONS ABOUT LAKESHORE DEVELOPMENTS

The Lake Erie shoreline is potentially a good area for industry, housing development and recreation as well as farming. It seems likely that all four forms of development will be competing for lakeshore space during the years ahead. This prospect gives rise to such questions as:

- Should all these competing uses be accommodated, and, if so, how?
- How should the various uses along the shoreline be linked with the urban system generally?
- More specifically, how should they be linked with the big L and with the smaller towns along the shoreline?
- What relationship should the lakeshore development have with adjacent farming developments?
- Should industrial and urban developments along the lakeshore be concentrated in centres distinct from those serving the farming community, or should existing centres serve both?



## "WHAT KIND OF REGION DO WE WANT?"

Regional development goals are concerned with the most basic question the people of any region can ask: "What kind of region do we want?"

Their answer, of course, depends on their needs and desires, and so these must determine what goals are set.

Setting the right goals is difficult, however, because they have to satisfy many different requirements at once. Provincial and regional authorities, for instance, usually see regional development in quite different terms, yet the goals they seek must satisfy both. And there is a difference as well between *provincial* goals for regional development and *regional* goals.

Provincial goals are goals formulated to help meet objectives that apply to all regions throughout the province. A regional goal is a goal set to help solve a problem (or several problems) that may exist only in that one region.

The Ontario Government's basic policies for regional development were first spelled out in the 1966 White Paper, *Design for Development*. In simple terms they can be summed up this way:

1. The government recognizes that private enterprise is vital to the provincial economy. The government intends to keep assessing the contribution of the private sector to see how it matches the needs and resources of the province. The government will develop policies to encourage the private sector to grow in a desirable and rational way.
2. The government wants to help develop in each region a social and economic climate in which people, as individuals, can use their capabilities to the fullest.
3. Policies should be adopted to encourage development of natural resources while conserving the aesthetic qualities of the environment.
4. The government should plan and carry out its spending in such a way as to benefit the regions, as well as the province as a whole, as much as possible.

5. The regional development program must be a working partnership between the people and the government.

*(The actual wording of these principles as endorsed by the Cabinet is in the panel to the right.)*

Provincial leaders have since amplified and promoted these principles by means of new research studies, public statements and legislation. In 1968, the Honourable John P. Robarts, then Prime Minister, and the Honourable W. Darcy McKeough, then Minister of Municipal Affairs and now Minister of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs, released *Design for Development: Phase Two*. In 1970, the departments of Municipal Affairs and Treasury and Economics issued *A Strategy for Southwestern Ontario* to show how the province's broad aims for regional development could be applied to the Lake Erie, St. Clair, Niagara and Midwestern Ontario regions.

To advance the aims of these white papers and subsequent cabinet announcements, the government has already introduced more stringent land-use controls through measures designed to limit urban development in rural areas.

Provincial principles are important to regional development for two reasons:

First, because the province is made up of ten regional units, provincial goals must be realized at the regional level.

Second, provincial goals in effect embody goals for regional development. These ensure that when an individual region adopts goals of its own, they will be compatible with the goals set for the province as a whole.

## CABINET ENUNCIATION OF PROVINCIAL GOALS

Here is the way the provincial Cabinet has expressed its fundamental policies affecting regional development:

1. That the vital role of the private sector be recognized, that its contribution to the provincial economy be continually assessed in view of provincial needs and resources, and that provincial policies be found to encourage a rational expansion of the private sector.
2. That individuals be encouraged to develop their full capabilities through provision of a climate of expanding social and economic opportunities for each region.
3. That regional and resource policies encourage adequate development of the natural environment while conserving the aesthetic qualities of that environment.
4. That the timing and impact of Ontario's large and expanding expenditures be planned and co-ordinated effectively to fulfill, in an orderly way, the needs of the regions in the province as well as of the province itself.
5. That this be a program for regional development which must necessarily involve a working partnership between all of the people of Ontario and government.

# SOME PLANNING ISSUES AS THE LAKE ERIE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SEES THEM



The Lake Erie Regional Development Council, having spent many hours discussing the future of the region — both among its members and with numerous citizens and groups — produced a document called *The Regional Goals Inquiry Report*. It lists these as major regional issues:

- Proper development control related to the provision of urban services.
- Removal of as much urban pressure as possible from agricultural land.
- The allocation of proper land uses in the face of development pressures.
- New structures of assessment, tax spreading and provincial grants.

The report also emphasizes that with big industrial developments about to take place in the region, there will be a need to provide housing and basic services for the increased population.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR REGIONAL GOALS

With an eye to regional concerns and with regard for what are likely to be the needs and desires of the people of the Lake Erie Region, a list of objectives compatible with provincial goals is offered here for consideration and discussion:

1. The region's major economic activities have certain needs as to their location and space, and these should be taken into account in the regional development program.
2. Economic growth should be channelled in a way that will create new jobs.
3. The program should encourage towns and cities to develop in ways that will make them identifiable, compact communities, avoiding unsightly, uneconomic sprawl.
4. The region needs a co-ordinated system of basic services (such as roads, sewers, water-mains) not only to satisfy the region's developing needs but also to provide a means of shaping its growth.
5. The program should promote development of recreation facilities and related services.
6. Farming is important to the region's economy and should be encouraged.
7. The people of the Lake Erie Region should be encouraged to take part in the planning process.

“AMONG MAJOR GOALS SUGGESTED:  
GROWTH THAT CREATES JOBS,  
AND CITIES THAT AVOID UNSIGHTLY  
URBAN SPRAWL”

# HOW DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES PRODUCE DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF GROWTH

The goals and objectives set out for discussion in the previous section could be achieved in many different ways.

This booklet does not presume to suggest which course the people of the Lake Erie Region should choose.

What follows, then, is a series of theoretical concepts. These could not be applied in the simple, extreme forms described, but they do illustrate how different techniques of encouragement and control can produce widely differing patterns of growth.

## EXAMPLE I: ADAPTING PRESENT TRENDS

This course accepts the idea that present trends are generally satisfactory and will lead to the best development of the region if just enough steps are taken to reduce the conflicts that lie ahead and accommodate the growth that will occur.

It is a case of modifying the forces already at work in the region, rather than changing them severely or reversing them. It is based on the existing official plans of individual communities, on planning proposals that have been made by various provincial departments, and on recognition of significant programs and projects already announced for the region.

To work properly, this first approach would call for municipalities to co-ordinate their services carefully. Changes in the structure of local government would probably be necessary but these would be worked out at the local level. There would have to be better co-ordination between provincial departments in all their activities in the region, and the co-operation between the government and private developers would have to be improved.

One important result of this approach would be rapid growth within the big L formed by the cities of St. Thomas, London,

Ingersoll and Woodstock. Industrial and commercial development would locate in open spaces now separating urban centres — a process that has already begun with establishment of the Ford assembly plant at Talbotville, just north of St. Thomas. Other industrial companies would be allowed to continue moving into the now-open spaces of the big L area, attracted there by the easy access they would have to major markets. These developments in turn would generate demand for new residential developments, which would be encouraged to locate in existing cities and larger towns.

Another important result of this approach would be that the big developments already announced or anticipated for the lakeshore would be readily accommodated. Incoming industries would be allowed to pick and choose their sites as long as their choices did not cause irreconcilable conflicts over the way the land would be used. As far as possible, existing communities along the lakeshore would absorb the new residents moving into the area.

Growth in the areas north and west of London would remain moderate, and the countryside would remain largely rural.

**“IF PRESENT TRENDS WERE ENCOURAGED,  
THE ‘BIG L’ WOULD GROW  
EVEN BIGGER, BUT MUNICIPALITIES  
WOULD HAVE TO CO-ORDINATE THEIR  
SERVICES TO AVOID HARMFUL CONFLICTS”**



\* Note: The map does not illustrate the impact of these major developments on adjacent centres.

Regional Development Branch,  
Ministry of Treasury and Economics

## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION

“CENTRALIZATION WOULD MEAN  
DOMINATION OF THE AREA BY TWO  
CITIES—LONDON, AND A NEW COMMUNITY  
CENTRED AT NANTICOKE”

## EXAMPLE II: CENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT

This approach calls for deliberate concentration of urban growth and new industry in a limited number of centres in the region. It is a scheme based on these assumptions:

- That modern business and industry will need an increasing amount of concentration.
- That promoting rapid growth in a limited number of centres will significantly benefit the rest of the Lake Erie Region.
- That concentrating the population in a limited number of urban centres will leave more of the rural area as is than any other alternative would.
- That there would be a physical separation of centres, especially between the two major growth centres proposed (i.e. London and Nanticoke).
- That areas likely to become sites for major industrial and community developments should be grouped and developed in a way that will minimize their impact on rural areas, thereby preventing valuable farmlands from disappearing under what the Honourable John Robarts, then Prime Minister of Ontario, once called “a sterile cap of asphalt and concrete”.
- That concentration of growth in selected centres would mean efficient use of watermains, sewers and other services, thus helping the region’s industries become more competitive with industries outside the region.
- That concentration would enable the region to make more efficient use of its highways, rail lines, telephone lines, computer cables and other facilities.

If this approach were followed, two major centres would dominate the region: London, and a community based on the new developments at Nanticoke. The centre at Nanticoke is expected to accommodate 200,000 to 300,000 residents by the year 2000. A population that big could easily support a wide range of community and commercial services. Meanwhile, London itself would become increasingly important as *the* major city of southwestern Ontario.



## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION

“DECENTRALIZATION WOULD STIMULATE GROWTH ALONG TWO TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS—HIGHWAY 401 AND A SECOND ROUTE TO U.S. MARKETS”

### EXAMPLE III: DECENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT

This approach calls for a more even distribution of growth than either of the other approaches described in this section. This distribution would be particularly evident along the lakeshore, where growth would not be limited to any one community but would be encouraged in all the larger centres in the area. Similarly, in the rest of the region, the aim would be to promote growth in such communities as Strathroy, Woodstock and Ingersoll, for the very reason that they are all considerably smaller than London.

This approach is based on these assumptions:

- That all cities, towns and villages throughout the region should be given every possible chance to grow.
- That the region has a second transportation corridor (along the lakeshore) capable of providing access to major markets.
- That the larger communities along this second corridor could cope with new growth.
- That this corridor could be strengthened significantly by Lakeshore developments now proposed or anticipated.

The most significant feature of this approach is the way it would encourage development of the second transportation corridor to link such communities as St. Thomas, Aylmer, Tillsonburg and Simcoe with major markets in the midwestern United States, the Hamilton-Niagara area and New York State.

At the same time there would be no restriction against continuing growth of the present transportation corridor (Highway 401) from Woodstock to London and westward.



\* Note: The map does not illustrate the impact of these major developments on adjacent centres.

Regional Development Branch,  
Ministry of Treasury and Economics

## LAKE ERIE DEVELOPMENT REGION

# EVERY TECHNIQUE HAS ITS ADVANTAGES AND DRAWBACKS

No plan, however well conceived, can please all the people in every way.

Each of the theoretically possible approaches described in the previous six pages of this booklet — and every other variation that could be considered — has advantages and disadvantages.

That's what makes planning both difficult and fascinating.

As you consider each possible technique for guiding or controlling the growth of your region, you have to take into account the advantages for some people and the drawbacks for others. Once you understand what these are, you can move on toward deciding which ought to have priority over others. To get one advantage you often have to give up some other advantage you'd like to have — or put up with some drawback you may find undesirable but tolerable.

If you decided, for instance, that it would be a good idea to concentrate new growth largely in the London-Ingersoll-Woodstock-St. Thomas "big L" corridor, you'd be providing one of the most efficient possible ways for existing communities to meet the costs of new roads, water-mains, sewers, gas lines, hydro-electric lines and other community services.

And, as new traffic was generated, much of it could use existing highways, rail lines and airports. Again, a saving.

Many of these savings would be enjoyed not only by municipalities but by industry, since good transportation means a saving in getting goods into the marketplace. Efficient industry means able competition against rivals in other regions, jobs in the local community, and so on.

But you have to consider, too, that concentration of growth in the big L might give rise to new social problems and conflicts — such as severe housing shortages in the fastest-growing areas; overcrowded schools,

development of high-rises where many people would prefer to see single-family houses — and so on. You can't put a dollar sign on all these factors, but they are important to a great many people and must be considered carefully.

And what about the communities and rural areas outside the big L? Would they get much benefit if growth were encouraged inside the big L, and discouraged in their areas? Don't they deserve at least as much consideration as the people living along the big L?

Or suppose growth were encouraged only in, say, London and Nanticoke. That might be handy for the people living and working in what, by then, would be the area's two major cities. But what about the people in outlying areas — including those in the good-sized cities and towns that now exist? Would they suffer from a lack of new industry? Would they be paying too high a price in this scheme of things, by having to travel long distances for good places to shop, good entertainment and dining out, good colleges for local students, good medical services?

You can argue with much justice that by concentrating the heaviest growth in two centres, you'd be taking the pressure off lands elsewhere that could thus be devoted to open-space activities such as farming and recreation. But what about the young people growing up in towns outside these growth areas — what if they want to stay in their home towns, expecting to find jobs? Is it fair, in effect, to force them to move to London or Nanticoke to find work at reasonable rates of pay?

## A MOVE TO MEDIOCRITY?

*All right, you say, then let's distribute growth equally.* That sounds fair and democratic — and perhaps it is the fairest way.

But will the result be a whole conglomeration of middle-sized towns, each with its own second-rate hotel, a café that can't afford a good chef, a movie theatre that can't get first-run films, and a handful of small industries that will perhaps never grow enough to make their towns really prosperous?

Would you find each of these towns with its own little shopping plaza — but none with the specialty shops carrying the exclusive fashions and sophisticated items that only big city stores can afford to stock?

Many people *like* their little towns just as they are. They don't *want* much growth or change. The less mobile people are, the less change they usually want to see — especially when they've reached retirement age. Elderly people deserve consideration in any development scheme — but how much weight should be given to their needs if the cost includes forcing young people to leave the region in pursuit of "big city" careers?

Again, if you spread the growth into all cities and towns, more or less in proportion to present populations, what chance does London have of enhancing its position as the unofficial capital of southwestern Ontario? Might it not pay to have London prospering and growing in obvious good health, as a focal point for the region and as an attraction to new companies and industries that might otherwise pass the region by?

As you can see, there are no absolutes in development planning — no policies or schemes that are entirely right or entirely wrong.

That's why it is so important for the people of a region to make their needs and wishes known — and thus help local officials and provincial planners draw up the list of priorities that are the most meaningful to those who live and work in the region.

## HOW YOU CAN PLAY A PART



This report discusses some of the issues facing the Lake Erie Region and offers some examples of the kind of development patterns that could be encouraged.

It details what has been happening along the vibrant, fast-growing "big L" area formed by the three cities of Woodstock, London and St. Thomas.

It looks at the possibilities of big developments along the shore of Lake Erie and suggests some benefits and problems that could result.

This report recognizes that the Lake Erie Region is in for some marked changes in the pace, the scale and the type of developments taking place, and it suggests that such changes call for some form of regional planning that hasn't been necessary in the past.

You won't find any pat solutions or final answers in this booklet. What is here is offered as one way of encouraging the people of the Lake Erie Region to think seriously about the future and to help search for the answer to the most fundamental question of all: "What kind of region do we want?"

Soon after this report is issued, a series of public meetings will be held to discuss the contents and to give everyone who is interested a chance to react to it.

Briefs and other submissions are also invited, for they can be most useful in helping to create a plan that truly reflects the wishes of the people.

To make any regional plan a success there must be a solid effort from all levels of government, plus a full, frank and thoughtful expression of views from municipal organizations, other public groups, businessmen, industrial leaders, farmers and other citizens.

Only with your help and participation can this program provide the guidance and controls that will help your community cope with — and benefit from — the changes that lie ahead.

You are invited to send your comments  
on this report to:

The Treasurer of Ontario,  
Queen's Park,  
Toronto 5, Ontario.



